



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

APR 12 2012

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF: E-19J

Charles Myers, Regional Forester
U.S. Forest Service
626 East Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 800
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

Re: Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) for the Land and Resource Management Plan for the Huron-Manistee National Forests, Michigan - EIS No. 20120079

Dear Mr. Myers:

In accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act, the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA Implementing Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, we have reviewed the Final SEIS and ROD for Huron-Manistee National Forests' Land and Resource Management Plan.

As indicated in the ROD, Alternative 4 has been selected to become Amendment #1 to the Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (2006 Forest Plan). Alternative 4 indicates that Management Area designations will be changed to manage for a less-roaded recreational experience while retaining firearm hunting opportunities.

In our letter dated December 23, 2011, EPA assigned a rating of "Environmental Concerns – Insufficient Information" to the Draft SEIS. Our request for information concerning the selection of 1-mile and 5-mile radius buffers around study areas to determine direct and indirect effects was addressed in the Final SEIS. However, two of our requests for additional information were not addressed in the Final SEIS. In particular, we had requested that the Final SEIS include the number of acres and percentages of Karner blue butterfly (KBB) habitat in the 14 Management Areas that could be negatively affected by increased deer populations as result of a firearm hunting ban. We had also requested the Final SEIS include the revision cycle for one of the three primary data sources used for the Supply and Demand Analysis.

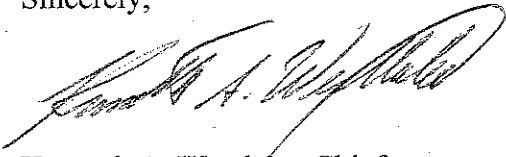
Even though Alternative 2, which would have closed 14 Management Areas to firearm hunting and thus have the potential effect of increasing deer populations resulting in a negative indirect effect on KBB habitat, was not selected, we believe the analysis would have benefitted from

discussion of suitable KBB habitat that could have been impacted from a rising deer population. Likewise, a discussion of the revision cycle for one of the primary data sources used for the Supply and Demand Analysis would have been beneficial for reviewers to understand why a more current version of *Outdoor Recreation for 21st Century America* was not obtained in light of recent economic fluctuations.

Nevertheless, based on our review of the supporting documentation, the purpose and need appears have been adequately addressed.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Kathleen Kowal of my staff at (312) 353-5206 or via email at kowal.kathleen@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Kenneth A. Westlake", is written over a horizontal line.

Kenneth A. Westlake, Chief
NEPA Implementation Section
Office of Enforcement & Compliance Assurance

cc: Jim McDonald, Regional Environmental Coordinator, USFS, Milwaukee, WI